Stadium for Civilian Population in Ranikhet

†4371. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any big playground or stadium is available for the civilian population near cantonment council in Ranikhet, Uttaranchal;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal for the improvement, extension of the said stadium; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. There is a piece of land measuring 4.497 acres situated outside the civil area of Ranikhet Cantonment. This land is classified as 'C land described as playground under the management of Cantonment Board.

(b) and (c) The Cantonment Board, Ranikhet, has taken up a proposal with the Government of Uttaranchal through District Magistrate, Almora for construction of stadium at an estimated cost of Rs. 73.39 lakhs.

Discussions between USA and India regarding purchase of arms, fighter aircrafts and ships

†4372 SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any discussions between USA and India have been held recently regarding purchase of arms, fighter aircrafts and ships for the Navy etc. in the near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether some agreements have been signed for the same recently?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Defence procurement proposals from the United States of America (US) are discussed through government channels in the framework of the India-US Defence Policy Group (DPG) and commercial channels through Requests For Proposals (RFP). Certain modest arms procurements have been finalised, but they do not include fighter aircraft or naval ships. The US has, however, responded positively to a Request for Information (RFI) for Medium Role Com bat Aircraft.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) No, Sir.

Procurement of multi-role combat aircraft

4373. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:.Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent decision of the US permitting US companies to bid for 126 multi-role combat aircraft to India, will facilitate licensed production of F-16 and F-18 aircrafts in India; and

(b) whether India is still keeping its options open for acquiring Israeli, French and South African made fighters for gradual replacement of the ageing MIG squadron with IAF?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Issue of licensed production is not connected with any specific aircraft. Request For Proposal (RFP) for procurement of aircraft including Transfer Of Technology (TOT) for manufacture under license as per need, is issued to the known vendors who are likely to meet the requirement of the Air Force.

Procurement of F-16 fighter planes

4374. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF is not in favour of acquiring F-16 fighter planes from USA A-l;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government is considering purchase of F-16 planes from the point of view of political and diplomatic angle; and

(c)what are the considerations before the Government to acquire F-16 which did not find favour with IAF?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness. It would not be in the interest of national security to give details.